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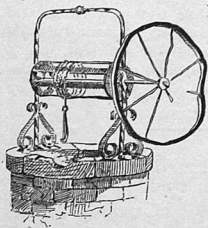
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WHY WE BOARD.



ence between the present day and the time of our grandmothers, when every young couple had a cosy nest of their own and boarding-houses were the exception and not the rule.

Outpourings of this nature are not infrequent when the most melancholy forebodings are indulged in about the future of the rising generation, who are deprived of a mother's care and flourish at their own sweet wills in the area ways and on the stairs of boarding houses, or run the streets in wild recklessness, destitute of all of the refining influences of the family circle and home surroundings.

Sometimes dyspeptic and desperate spirits go even further than this, and state boldly what is indeed the under-current of the entire subject; a desire to attribute all of this evil to the degeneracy of the modern woman, her general uselessness, incompetency and extravagance, and her preference for the promiscuous society of the boarding-house rather than her own domestic fireside. While it is not questioned that there are useless and silly women who shirk whatever stern realities and duties they are not absolutely compelled to assume, it is safe to assert that there are but few women who do not ardently desire their own homes, and would be glad to remain in them if they could find adequate provision for the comforts that alone make home pleasant or desirable.

It might be well if some of these would-be philanthropists would look a little way below the surface and find out why these things are so before they arraign that class of persons who of all others are the most helpless in such matters.

The average writer or speaker on this and kindred subjects, appears to start out by taking for granted the thing that he is required to prove. He learns from the columns of the daily papers, and the gossip of his numerous acquaintances, that there are great numbers of families in New York and other large cities who board, and their discomforts, and bickerings, and mishaps furnish no end of readable incidents and materials for moralizing on the follies and vanities of women and their general degeneracy, than which morsel nothing is more appetizing to mortal man as a breakfast relish. The neglected condition of some family of children in their acquaintance, and some mother's carelessness or indifference, supplies the other ingredients for this witches' broth which they pour in generous libations upon the heads of the unfortunate female population, who, having few or no avenues to the reading public, have been forced to suffer in silence, until the community has come to the conclusion that women are altogether responsible for this state of things.

As a matter of fact there are no conveniently accessible apartments in New York city that are suitable for very small families of cultivated tastes and moderate means. With the enormous number of apartment houses and flats that have sprung up all over the city, one looks in vain for accommodations for young couples or families numbering three or four persons, who, while engaged in light elegant employment of various sorts, do not earn large salaries and find the strictest economy necessary in order to have what are to them the necessities of life. Clerks, book-keepers, artists, the thousands of well-bred and refined ladies and gentlemen who have in many instances been reared in homes of luxury, have absolutely no provision made for them, and must perforce be content to herd like sheep in boarding-houses, often several in one room, or simply exist, for it cannot be called living, in back rooms of tenement houses or in comfortless quarters in business blocks without any of the surroundings that their birth and education would seem to entitle them to.

The various suburbs afford comfortable and commodious quar-

ters, but are reached at a cost in transit of time and money that puts them beyond the means of the class of persons to whom they would be most beneficial, and who from their cultivated tastes and their limited facilities for enjoyment, would doubtless most highly appreciate them.

In a city there is so much ground space wasted in rookeries and tumble-down buildings, it is strange indeed that a demand so imperative cannot be met. There is need in every cross-town street of an apartment house for clerks, one with three or four rooms to the flat and with all conveniences. It is idle to say that such a building would not pay. It certainly would if properly conducted and thoroughly fitted up, and would without doubt be among the most popular of apartment houses. There are many clerks in our stores who will not go a long distance from their business if they can get suitable accommodations in the vicinity. There are always persons in moderate health who prefer to be near their place of business, indeed must be, as in extremes of heat and cold they suffer severely, and are compelled to avoid all exposure, even at the sacrifice of nearly every comfort in living. Besides, to many of these, the cost of a car fare each way every day means just so much deprivation in directions where they can ill afford to spare it.

Apartments could be built with such comforts and conveniences that in them this class of persons could find the home shelter they so much need. I know of homes, so called by courtesy, where the space is so limited that the husband and father can with difficulty find room to sit down after his day's work is done, and until the children are in bed and asleep and their playthings cleared away it requires no little skill to get about the rooms without coming in contact with some of the necessary articles of furniture. I know also of more than one case where the imperative demand for quiet "so that baby could go to sleep" has driven the husband and father into the street, because there was no other place to go. The allurements of the saloon are not lost upon such men, and after a time the warmth and brightness and welcome they find there begin to do their fatal work, and the man takes his first degree in sin on the night when he first discovers that there is a brighter, warmer, more roomy place than his home in which he can spend his evenings.

There are few more potent attractions than light and warmth, and these the saloon offers without stint to the chilled and unsatisfied man who is glad to get out of the limited space where he knows he is only in the way. And this too without a feeling of unkindness in heart toward the members of his little family. There is simply no room and no one seems to be to blame; look where he will he can find nothing better.

A New York merchant has invested a large amount of money in building up a western town. It might with propriety be questioned whether it would not have been more to his credit, as it undoubtedly would have been to his profit, had he spent some portion of it in making his clerks more comfortable by providing homelike and convenient apartments in which they might live.

Every woman wants her own home, but that she should shudder at the thought of attempting to make it in the apartments that are constructed for the accommodation of people of moderate means, is no wonder. Barren, cheerless and uninviting as it is possible for a dwelling to be, she may well stand in tearful discouragement at an undertaking that would tax the powers of an expert of iron-clad patience and unlimited ingenuity. There are rough, uneven floors with wide cracks between the boards, wood work that shrinks more and more day by day; coarse, rough, uncompromising, white, plastered walls, too frequently cracked all around the ceiling if indeed they are not covered with patches but imperfectly concealed by cheap calomine; cheap window glass, cheap door fittings, in a word with a general effect that suggests "a finished by contract job" and a poor one at that. And for this make-shift tenement all the way from \$35 to \$75 is charged, according to location and the height above the ground floor—unless there is an elevator, and then the higher you go the higher

the price, at least in many instances, the agent or owner often claiming that the better light and air more than make up for the discomfort of living in upper flats. Indeed, in buildings without elevators this claim has often been made by the agent with the most amusing coolness, insisting that it really paid to go up stairs for the sake of the view and the air, even at the same rent.

In ordinary conversation we often hear of specially desirable small apartments, but when we attempt to find them, they are like the will o' the wisp, and even the most patient traveler fails to come up with them.

The apartments that are regularly offered are too common for anything like fine furnishings, and too badly arranged for comfort or convenience. They are bleak and cheerless in winter, and insupportably warm in summer, the ventilation is the fine art of bad management, and altogether it would be difficult to find a low-priced apartment in New York City that could have more defects and discomforts than it already possesses.

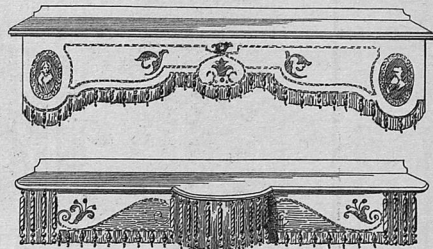
Is it impossible to get seasoned lumber? Are there no skilled workmen? Has architectural genius turned its entire attention to palaces and public buildings? Is the comfort of the army of the world's workers of no account, that there is no suitable place provided in which they can be housed?

One of the most serious objections to flats, as a rule, is that they have too many rooms and too little comfort. Let some enterprising real estate owner build apartments in accessible localities. Let them consist of three or four well-appointed, well-finished rooms, and offer them to clerks, artists and literary persons. Whoever will do this will not only find it a profitable investment, but will earn and deserve the gratitude of a large class of persons who are now at the mercy of boarding-house keepers and restaurants, simply from inability to find the home comforts they most ardently desire.

DESIGNS FOR MANTEL-BOARD VALANCES.

WE illustrate below two mantel-board valances, and append here hints as to the manner in which each of them should be made up.

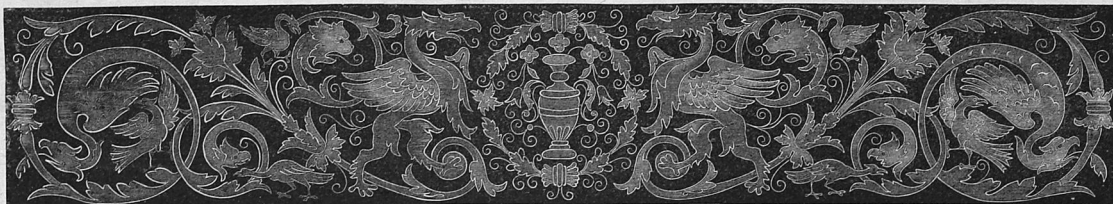
The first should have a polished wood top, with a strip on the under side to which to fix the drapery. The accompanying diagram gives the



half-section of the cutting size for a 5 ft. mantel-board. If required longer or shorter, it would be best to alter it at the center point. A fringe of about 2 in. deep would be sufficient, in addition to the size given.

The second mantel-board is also intended for a polished wood top, with a wood strip underneath, standing back three-quarters of an inch, to which to fix the valance. The general remarks made with regard to the first will apply equally to the present design.—*Furniture Gazette, London.*

THE highest art education is that which fits one for the making of a home—a home, not a storehouse or curiosity shop.—*Edmund Russell.*



DESIGN FOR APPLIQUE WORK ON MANTEL LAMBREQUIN.